Sunday, February 19, 2012
Notes on Falk and Krieger, Path to Zero

Xv The questions for humankind are, How will we respond to these immensely powerful weapons? Are we **capable** of eliminating their threat? Can **civilization make the leap to survival** in a world with thousands of nuclear weapons? Will humankind become the victim of its own cleverness?

[**Will civilization survive civilization? Survive the rise of science in context with wars? Will humanity survive humanity? What other species will survive humanity**?]

The so-called experts and their political allies
have brought us to the brink of the nuclear precipice

["use" should include attack, threats to attack, and promises (to allies) to attack, in response to nuclear or non-nuclear attack (NATO may be most valuable to the US as a basis for US influence on European economic affairs and policies, in payment for US promise of "protection," (a protection racket) from exaggerated threats). Thus, a threat to Europe is valuable to the US to rationalize its offer of protection/deterrence.]

[What people don't know:

--elementals: difference between A and H bombs (role of testing)

--effects of H-bombs

--fallout (Ike: keep them confused...don't mention fallout); nuclear winter; ozone; fire

--the mythical nature of the official story (hst, Stimson/Conant/McG B) about Hiroshima decisio-making and the alternatives; the real ("trivial") motives of US leaders for using A-bombs (lack of strong inhibition; dangers posed by US; need to deter US... (and the illusion of a German race)

--targets of A, then h-bombs: cities

--the absence of a real nuclear threat from the SU (as from Germany) for the first two decades of the nuclear era: no missile gap, no bomber gap, no race: on the contrary. And the extreme exaggeration of SU non-nuclear capability.

--the very possibility, the likelihood, the preeminent danger of US-initiated nuclear war (since Hiroshima and Nagasaki): mostly outside Europe (though, Berlin!)

--myth that "no weapon has been used since Nagasaki" (Falk!)

--myth that "sole purpose of nuclear weapons is to deter their use by others" (= Reagan: who maintained Carter Doctrine, and didn't entertain NFU): fact that no president has acted on this.

--numbers of US FU threats, seriousness, occasions/motives, how close we came

--effect of these on shaping and sizing US FS capabilities, as backup to FU threats (thus, effect on maintaining a nuclear-winter-capability: on both sides)

--real closeness, possible consequences of C-II (and its origins, what ended it)

--Type II deterrence, FS, NATO and elsewhere

--the aim of "damage-limiting" (by means of prompt counterforce, preemption, response to fallible warning, large and accurate weapons, decapitation...

--effect of this on nature of forces, danger of preemption: D-L, CF, preemption, alert, LOW, false alarms (uncertainty)

--decap, delegation (Dead Hand)

--reasons for instability: vulnerable ICBMs (both sides)

--accidents

--possibilities of unauthorized action

--actual false alarms

--actual US "anti-proliferation" policy (selective toleration of nucs in friends: which have included Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, Israel, India (and France and UK, both helping Israel), South Africa...

--lack of concern about averting Soviet build-up or maintenance of huge forces: rejection of opportunities, offers, failure to exploit discovery of absence of missile or bomber gap, ban on MIRVs (earlier, ban on H-bomb testing), ban on missile testing, end of Cold War, offers by Gorbachev or Yeltsin...

--US opposition to NFU

--objection of NNWS to US FU threats ("greatest crime against humanity" to carry out)

[Thus, Krieger is right that people greatly underestimate the unreliability of deterrence in preventing nuclear explosions and war (and the dangerous effects of failure): i.e., they overestimate the protection it provides. However, they are aware in a vague (underestimated) way of most of these dangers—in fact, they're always being alerted to the danger that it will fail if the US does not do some vast new program, and to the need for an ABM program—and K is wrong to emphasize so much that "deterrence theory" presents deterrence as thoroughly reliable: this is a straw man.

Also, both Krieger and Falk fail to emphasize the distinction between Type I and Type II deterrence, and US reliance on the latter: on FU and FS threats (Falk proposes NFU, without bringing out that this would not only be a "good, reassuring" move but a radical **change** in US policy and strategy, virtually a reversal (though the public doesn't realize this).

To abandon even Type I deterrence (even if it becomes the "sole function" of nuclear weapons, a radical shift) it's not enough to argue or even show that it can fail; one must show that its risks of various kinds (not only of failing but of promoting proliferation, and even maintenance of huge Russian forces, esp. if its "sole function" is ambiguous by virtue of size and nature).

Also, the argument that threats and risks and preparations for nuclear war (possession) are inherently and unequivocally immoral (or illegal: vs. ICJ majority, 11-3) does not accord with vast majority of popular opinion (though there has been little discussion of the morality of carrying out the threats).

(Note: ICJ failed to address the legality (or morality) of preparing or committing to an **unlimited** nuclear attack undertaken to avert a risk to "the survival" of a particular nation or alliance. I.e., it did not rule out causing nuclear winter, or destruction of ¼ the earth's population... Or the illegality of threatening this, making it possible, allowing it to commence "accidentally"...

Nor did it come down explicitly—as its own logic seemed to suggest (to Falk)—for NFU. (In fact, it left open the NATO FU threat: or Pakistan's, Israels's (despite the global effects of even 100-200 Hiroshima weapons! Is it legal for Pakistan, say, to put its own (political!) "survival" above the global ozone effects of an India-Pakistan exchange? Or for Russia or the US to risk destruction of all complex life?

4. Ike threatened FU as a "nondefensive use" in Korea, "to bring the Korean War to an end" (i.e., against a new offensive; or even, to end stalemate? That was consistent with his recommendation to LBJ to use them in NVN!)

4. Falk mentions threat against underground targets: but doesn't mention Iran! Do they ever?! (p. 12) 21

5. F: no mention of public concern about testing (not in a crisis period); and eventual effectiveness of movement against this. (C-II changed JFK's attitude on this, not so much the public's, leading to PTB).

6. F: "no weapons has been **used** since Nagasaki" !!

7 I agree with K that public complacency is not so much despair at change as "failure to fully recognize the seriusness of the danger." (thanks to **secrecy about plans, threats, effects, real aims of policy; deception (about US policy); official silence about weapons effects (lack of "environmental impact statement" about nuclear war!; ignorance about factors above; silence on the part of other nations, NWS and NNWS; lack of**

Congressional investigation or debate (or knowledge); lack of media investigation; false belief that for sixty years, we have not only had no nuclear war, but we have *never been close* to having one (unless, Cuban Missile Crisis): it has been an era of safety, both nuclear safety and (thanks to nuclears) safety from superpower war. (Note: was *the contingency of an uprising in East Europe in which some Warsaw Pact forces joined the rebels*, entirely illusory? (Was it really safe for the Soviets to build up Warsaw Pact forces at all? Was this to deter NATO forces from intervening in an uprising?) Or, a Soviet move on Berlin? Or, a false alarm?)

Sword of Damocles: quote JFK. Holding hostage. Protection racket. (Nuclear "umbrella")

Odd of Falk to object to term Nuclear Era on grounds of low public awareness, concern, mobilization. No, it doesn't have the current awareness of the Climate Crisis: but it should! (And note how little that has brought about!) He seems to worry (12-13) that other problems will be deprecated by naming this the Nuclear Era.

[See the deprecation of dangers of the Nuclear Era (e.g. by McGeorge Bundy!) as in sync with the Merchants of Doubt: about tobacco, about climate change!

[The main nuclear threat is still from states: Pakistan, the US, not from terrorists. And the obstacle to **reducing** the danger is the US, preeminently: the danger of FU, and the danger of all-out war, nuclear winter, and even opposing regional war, between Pakistan and India.

[Explain, as K does not, how the **dangers** of alert, and false alarms, **arise: what** are the aims, policy, strategy, grand design, instrumental objectives, criteria, service interests, MIC interests, that preserve these real dangers (including unauthorized actions, accidents): what has to change, in the way of policy, not just "management", to "de-alert": FS threats, FU threats, damage-limiting, preemption, quick response to warning (to get urgent, vulnerable Russian forces, and to avoid loss of our own vulnerable forces and command). **Why are** ICBMs still on alert (and SLBMs on station, requiring at least eight)? Actually, this is anachronistic, even from a strategic point of view, but still reflects service (and MM states) interests.

22 . F: I **suppose** this is our underlying claim: that unless we

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treat the menace of nuclear weapons and nuclearism as a moral and political priority, we have no realistic hope of eliminating this weaponry from our planet. By calling our time the Nuclear Age, we intend to convey a sense that this challenge of abolition is symbolically and substantively the most urgent struggle of our time**, at least for those of us living here in the United States.**

Falk is oddly worried that the struggles of, say, Third World people will be deprecated by K's focus on nuclear problems; he doesn't seem to want to acknowledge that the nuclear dangers, along with the climate dangers, are in a special class by themselves, which don't have urgent impact on people outside the West or the US. They do (sure, not for those facing immediate starvation or degradation): and it's not actually clear that any of us, no matter how rich, can actually affect, say, either of these problems; but they do threaten everyone, in an ultimate sense, and a sense that never existed before. ("The poor ye have always with us.") (And the difficulty of eliminating the nuclear danger—**especially the prospect of nuclear winter, or of continent-wide mega-deaths**—is mainly a matter of perspective of, pressure on, small political elites, changing their imperial strategy if not, even, their imperial goals. Eliminating the use of coal and oil is considerably more challenging...no?)

[Whether we know it or not—hardly anyone does—we have lived for sixty years in the shadow of recurrently and frequently imminent nuclear war—all-out or regional—and nuclear accidents (**like, nuclear melt-downs in power plants: many near-misses**! 9-11 being one!) There has been a sixty-year absence of nuclear war, but not of absence of real risk, or a steadily low level of danger. Not in the absence of secret nuclear threats, some or many of which were not bluffs (even some that failed to compel: see 1969). And the ones that succeeded—Iraq in 1991?—were not certain to do so. C-II: known to be dangerous, but actually far more dangerous than almost anyone has yet realized. More reality to "horror movies" like Dr. Strangelove (or Fail-safe, or Twilight's Last Gleaming, or War-games) than anyone realizes.

p. 25, Chapter 2, Falk and Krieger

Falk: There is no doubt that the core rationale for the retention of nuclear weapons remains tied to the concept of deterrence. During the Cold War this seemed plausible, given the confrontation between two hostile superpowers, but even then ***nuclear deterrence was far more dangerous for the future of humanity than risks associated with a disarmament process that aimed at the abolition of this weaponry***. Of course, it was not only the issue of perceived risk. It was the linking of **security to the politics, legality, and morality of making credible threats to annihilate indiscriminately and in a massive manner the cities and people of a foreign country and to fill the world's atmosphere with lethal fallout that would cause death and disease in completely neutral societies as well as in those of the parties to the conflict.**

[Never asked: "Did we have a right to base our security on this threat, and to build the machinery that could, on command or by accident, carry it out? Suppose it appeared to be the best available "option" [again, could this properly be regarded as an "option," the legitimate choice of a particular leader or nation?]: the "lesser evil," the only way to avoid...what?

An imminent surprise attack, which could be averted no other way?...[in reality, in the early *decades* we were faced with no such threat, no such possibility! Its emergence was a direct effect of our threats! No, the threat was developed to avert a supposed Soviet attack on Europe, or the credible threat of such an attack. *No other way* to diminish this, or avert it?!

But suppose it was the only way. That would be the signal that the set of options must be enlarged, that the system must be changed, that this is a time to *explore* and invent new, better, moral, legitimate options.

The political debate during this Cold War period always had an apocalyptic tone: The pro-deterrence security establishment argued in favor of what was called "mutual assured destruction," or "better dead than red," while opponents pointed out that the acronym for this reliance on deterrence was appropriately "MAD " and reversed the slogan of nuclearists by signaling their preference for "better red than dead."

As Compton said of atmospheric ignition: Better red (or earlier, Nazi) than everyone dead, end of life on earth. But short of that: (acknowledging that there are things worse than life under the Nazi or Soviet heel: is not execution of the SIOP one of those things? Even without nuclear winter?! 600 million—1.2 billion dead, the cities of the Northern Hemisphere gone?

And not only dead, but "killed by us"? Murdered, by us? And what of the neutrals killed, to avert our subjugation? Or rather: to avoid Berlin being occupied, Germany...

Are there, or are there not, threats that are "too large" to be legitimate, accepted, not resisted? Revenge, retaliation, too destructive? (especially, of those not

involved, in effect, scapegoats—collateral damage of revenge, harmed as the result of a failed deterrent threat? Hostages.

27. Is the **threat** of indiscriminate slaughter illegal? Immoral? Most people think not.

29. [They don't seem to be distinguishing between Type I and Type II, or focusing on the role of Type II! (Falk's definition elides the difference).

30/. Israel: deterrence of retaliation to Israel's expansionist moves! (not, deterring conventional aggression). Deterring another power from joining in defense of an "insurgency" resisting one's own repressive partner: US supporting SVN repression of an independence movement, threatening NVN against directing, supporting or joining in the "uprising." This was not exactly "Type II deterrence" against an aggressive non-nuclear attack! Were there other cases where the US wanted to help a dictatorial regime put down a rebellion, and wanted to deter by threat of nuclear weapons an attempt by the SU or China to help the rebels? [CW fear: Soviet support, even armed support, to rebels against the US-dominated sphere of influence, often "non-Free," inductive to rebellion, as in Latin America] (See B-36 to region of Guatemala in 1954?)

Falk: In my view, Israel, for instance,
seeks to retain a regional monopoly of nuclear weaponry in the Middle East not only because it fears an attack but so that it will have a free hand in threatening or waging conventional wars against its neighbors without fear of non-nuclear retaliation because it would have the sole regional option of responding with nuclear weapons.

Falk: I am increasingly inclined to think of deterrence as a *rationalization,* that is, an excuse for retaining and developing nuclear weaponry that hides rather than discloses the real reasons, rather than as a *rationale,* that is, an explanation for the persistence of the weaponry. If deterrence were the major part of the story, then it would seem reasonable to expect the United States especially to have initiated disarmament negotiations either during the peace-oriented leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev in the last years of the Soviet Union or certainly in the immediate aftermath of the Soviet collapse in 1991. But there was no move in this direction. Quite to the contrary, **there were reports at the time that Washington was encouraging Boris Yeltsin's Russia to keep its nuclear arsenal intact and not to embarrass the United States by suggesting a receptivity to nuclear disarmament. [REFERENCES?]** In this sense, while acknowledging the significance of deterrence in explaining the public reluctance to part with the weaponry, I believe there are **additional reasons** that the security establishment, in this country at least, seeks to retain and spends billions to modernize the weaponry.

[What are these additional reasons? He refers to "grand strategy" of US (in addition to the money benefits to the MIC). OK: See the US role in Europe; US as guarantor of the Middle East, control of oil (and dollar as reserve currency). US as protector of Japan. (In other words, not just US concern to deter conventional attacks: but to pose as the protector, against threats that are in many cases exaggerated by the US, in order to provide "protection" in the classic Mafia fashion! **PROTECTION RACKET**

33 Krieger seems to rely frequently on a straw man argument, that deterrence is claimed or believed to be totally reliable, that it "works" under all circumstances. Wrong, as Falk points out.
Also, ignores that nucs CAN reduce likelihood of being attacked (by the US, or others), as Falk points out for Iraq.

38. [Couldn't a retaliatory strategy aim at really minimizing collateral damage and the risk of nuclear winter? Thus, there is no excuse for retaliation (or first-strike) that aims at targets near or in cities! (for smoke reasons, apart from the "human smoke"! **The smoke from our portable Auschwitzes would kill the murderers, kill us all! (A disadvantage of taking the gas ovens to the victims, burning them in their houses and beds; the burning of the latter adds to the smoke! And creating the smoke in many places simultaneously has effects similar to causing fires in many places simultaneously, creating a firestorm!**

We have b een more than passive, more than complicit, in the creation of a Soviet doomsday machine! (Along with our own!) We have done *nothing* to encourage the dismantling of the Russian D.M., ever: quite the contrary, everything to discourage them from doing so. (See Falk above!) See GHWB/Cheney rejection of Yeltsin proposal to go down to 1000 warheads (in 1992?) (not enough in itself, but in the right direction. See consideration of 300, or 700 now: hardly any chance of US espousing this, even for arms control proposal!)

And short of nuclear winter: consider plans, preparations, threats and readiness for *continent-wide destruction: SU-Europe, US. Hemispheric annihilation.*

39. Falk: **The moral critique of deterrence is unconditional**, and if morality guided policy and governmental approaches to security, it would have long ago led to the abandonment of a security function for nuclear weapons, especially if the threat to use them is taken into full account

[I think Falk is ignoring "actually-existing morality," the real "operational code," not only of the managers but of the public (not the bishops), which does **not** rule out, as immoral, threats of actions that would be immoral to carry out, threats of disproportionate damage, even threats of world annihilation. Nor is there a consensual (or even much discussed, reflected upon) ethics of risk-taking, such that taking a risk of huge, even world annihilation is absolutely ruled out to avert or reduce a (higher-probability) risk of a lesser evil.

There is not wide agreement (though I wish there were) that taking such risks or making such threats is per se immoral, for all circumstances. Thus, the persistence of acceptance of these risks and threats does not demonstrate that considerations of morality are irrelevant (though this apparent argument is odd for Falk to make, since he is arguing that what is essential is a broad social movement based on moral considerations, whereas Krieger, again oddly, is stressing the prudential aspect!]

K argues that the "theory" of deterrence is "faulty and dangerous" to rely on, so that rational argument is necessary and can be effective.

33 Perhaps you are right that rational debate cannot win the day on this issue, but at the same time it would be foolish to cease to attempt rational arguments to oppose reliance upon a theory as faulty and dangerous as nuclear deterrence.

(Does Falk not object to this characterization of his view? Indeed, it does seem to correspond to what he said earlier.) (What about rational argument to the prudential concerns of the majority of the public, not those most benefited by the arms race?!)

39. K: A country cannot escalate to the use of nuclear weapons without the **risk** of triggering national suicide and **possibly** a global holocaust. In a **global** nuclear war, there would be no victors, only losers. The U.S. president who recognized this clearly was Ronald Reagan, who concluded, "**A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought**." Drawing upon this conclusion, Reagan continued, speaking of the United States and former Soviet Union, "The **only value** in our two nations possessing nuclear weapons is **to make sure they will never be used**. But then would it not be better to do away with them entirely?"[1] Reagan was able to follow the logic of the situation to the need to abolish the weapons. If Reagan, a staunch Cold Warrior, could understand this logic, it should be clear to everyone who thinks about it.

[But Reagan's quoted statement, "A nuclear war..." is valid only for "global, all-out nuclear war." His other quote, "The only value..is to make sure they will never be used" is an endorsement of the "sole function" proposition (urged on Obama, but rejected, in 2010); yes, from that, (inspected, reliable) abolition would follow as preferable to mutual possession. But most presidents have not believed that, and none have acted on it, including Reagan, who endorsed Carter's Doctrine in the Middle East, of FU against conventional attack (and kept it in Europe: why didn't he proposed NFU, ever?! If he believed what he said?

The statements are true (though nat. sec. bureaucrats have always believed that a unilateral use of tac nucs, say in the Middle East, unreciprocated by the Soviets, would be won and might well be fought: see also Indochina, Taiwan Straits...; or, against BW or CW...), but Reagan didn't believe or act on either of them.

And why in the world did he need to demand a short- and long-term program of BMD faced with a real possibility of eliminating Soviet nuclear weapons?! (Against the long-term threat of BM from other countries?! What was the rush about that? Gorbachev only asked a ten-year commitment against tests in space! The SU could join immediately in research; while abolition could have proceeded quickly!)

33 K You suggest that there are only two ways in which the public could become engaged in dislodging nuclear deterrence: first, through the destruction of the concept's credibility by **the use of a nuclear weapon**; **[The Kaufman proposition; see Tsipis and (to me, 1994]** second, through development of an existential fear that the weapons might be used

against us. Many other people share this perspective. It is one that admits

to the ineffectiveness of logic, but it also presupposes a failure of human imagination to come to grips with the real threat that nuclear deterrence poses to the human future. Perhaps we humans are not wired to imagine our collective demise. [**or to *care* about the mass deaths of "others"; or even of our children or grandchildren; or the "long-term future"; or "an uncertainty".]**

K.I would suggest, though, that a peace built on nuclear threat is a highly unstable peace, one that will lead to nuclear proliferation, nuclear terrorism, and nuclear war.

Awakening Civil Society

Krieger: We share a commitment to awakening civil society to the **dangers** of the Nuclear Age. It is a daunting task, but an absolutely necessary one. [**But also: to the possibility of change; and our responsibility to do so; (and perhaps, to *caring* about the threatened dangers, in the longer-run, to all of us). Either leaders or public would have to change their *priorities* of concern, awareness, activism (in the face of alternative challenges)**

F:I believe the **abandonment** by Obama of his Prague vision of a world without nuclear weapons **has taken place** because no popular movement exists to promote this goal. There was a resonant reaction, which registered widespread public approval of the speech, but without an accompanying politics capable of challenging the entrenched interests of the nuclear weapons establishment, the vision will soon dissipate and **disappear** from the mainstream political arena. **This has already happened.** Our role as citizens and activists is to build a political climate that creates the space for a receptive leadership in Washington and elsewhere to move forward. It is a recipe for frustration to believe that we currently possess the leverage to strengthen the will of

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the policy-making community in Washington. If Kissinger's Gang of Four was unable to shake confidence in nuclearism, it is foolhardy to believe that **we** have the relevant clout. We need to concentrate on sustaining rational debate and encouraging grassroots opposition, which, **when historical events conspire**, can take the shape of a vibrant antinuclear movement. Until that day comes, **we will have to be content with the thankless work of articulating necessary truth in the** wilderness, that is, unheeded and mostly unheard by the mainstream.

[Some truths remain to be articulated by "us". See my book.]

A Moral Perspective

/Falk, unlike K, acknowledges that nuclear threats can work, can even increase (in the short-run, regionally) the security of weak states (North Korea, Pakistan, Iran, Israel), thus that "deterrence" is not entirely a "myth," an "insanity" as K would prefer to say (neither Type I nor II: Israel does have reason to want a nuclear monopoly, though it's the one Falk describes; and Iran does have reason to want to break it, especially if it wants a freer hand to support Hamas and Hezbollah and exert regional influence: though neither of these seems really "vital" in a larger context).

Chapter 7:

[p. 11, doc}Falk: The fact that **no weapon has been used since Nagasaki** reinforces both governmental and public complacency, giving rise to a form of false
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consciousness supposing that since nuclear war has not taken place in these sixty-seven years, it will never happen—that the weapons are safe and secure, and there is no great cause for concern

p. 135: **Falk:** I would situate the failure of mobilization somewhat differently. In my view, the primary failure relates to the inability of antinuclear activists and intellectuals to mobilize those who would support nuclear disarmament, even with enthusiasm, but are unmoved to demand such a result or to engage actively in the struggle to attain antinuclear goals. This shallowness of motivation makes the concern seem to have a low priority. **[It means it does have a low priority, for them: like the Freeze in 1984.]** This undoubtedly reflects many different considerations: a sense of despair about challenging such an entrenched national security posture, a false partial acceptance of the relative stability of the present nuclear regime because
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of **the absence of use in sixty-six years**, **[No No![** and a rather irrational concern that perhaps giving up nuclear weapons would make the country vulnerable to nuclear terrorism and to a government that "cheated" during the disarming process. As I have stressed throughout these conversations, no rational closure is possible on these issues as the uncertainties are too pervasive. This means that our attitude toward nuclear weapons involves weighing **essentially incalculable risks**, **[ambiguity? Leading to wishfulness? Deference to authority?}** and when it comes to national security, citizens have a broad willingness to defer to the views of the government, even when they collide with ethical convictions and political preferences. In the end, only competing views of human nature and values count, whether they see human nature as essentially aggressive or only conditionally so. **[I question Falk's emphasis on these "competing views of human nature.]** It seems to me that those who say that the path of legality is a dead end when it comes to nuclear weaponry—the Kissingerian mentality—always prefer the risks of nuclear possession to those of nuclear disarmament. In

Krieger: sees the danger (only?) in possession, which is legitimized by "deterrence theory." He doesn't see degrees of danger, relating to (mutual) posture, which in turns reflects policy, the actual uses (not "non-use"!) of nuclear weapons in the eyes of leaders (and politicians and their sponsors).

K: 137 The weakness of the law at present lies in its not directly challenging possession of nuclear weapons. So long as nuclear deterrence justifies possession, nuclear catastrophe is just the push of a button or a mishap away. **[*But it does make a difference whether weapons depend on LOW, quick response to warning! Doctrine of damage-limiting, first-strike threat, preemption, FU, (even SLBMs have to be near targets, on station: requiring a large number, at least 8): Have to pretend to believe, "credibly" (plausible denial of belief in***